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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 001973

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP, DRL, INL
NSC FOR D.WALTON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SNAR](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: PAPUA -- SENSITIVE DATE PASSES WITHOUT MAJOR
INCIDENT

Classified By: Acting Pol/C Daniel A. Rochman, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: December 1, a highly symbolic date to Papuan independence supporters, passed without major incident in Indonesia's sometimes restive eastern provinces. Police detained fifteen demonstrators who had gathered without appropriate permits but none have been charged. Other peaceful rallies took place without incident. Foreign NGO reports of a violent police crackdown on demonstrators in the provincial capital Jayapura are unsubstantiated. While some Papuans took to the streets to protest political and economic marginalization, others pressed their views through the democratic process. END SUMMARY.

SENSITIVE DATE PASSED PEACEFULLY

12. (C) Indonesia's sometimes tense eastern provinces of Papua and West Papua were largely calm on December 1--the date Papuan separatists regard as their "independence day." (Note: On December 1, 1961, colonial officials began allowing Papuans to use the Morning Star flag and other symbols of sovereignty in what was then Dutch New Guinea. Papuan separatists believe this first step toward independence was derailed by a UN-supervised process that transferred the region from Dutch to Indonesian control. The GOI regards the Morning Star flag as a separatist symbol and restricts its use, although enforcement of this prohibition is uneven.) The date remains a flashpoint for many Papuans who resent the government's failure to fully implement the region's Special Autonomy Law. Papua's chronic economic underdevelopment--despite vast natural resources--also feeds Papuan resentment.

13. (SBU) While activists held several rallies and prayer vigils in Jayapura, Biak, Wamena, Sorong and other Papuan cities, there were no credible reports of violence either by protesters or the security forces. Students at Cendrawasih University in the provincial capital Jayapura also held a large rally but police blocked them from marching to the city center. The crowd dispersed without incident. Activists also held a peaceful vigil at the grave of murdered Papuan activists Theys Eluay near Jayapura.

REPORTS OF VIOLENCE UNSUBSTANTIATED

14. (C) Reports from UK-based Papuan activists of police violence in the Jayapura suburb of Polimak are unfounded. The reports, widely circulated by email, claimed that police Mobile Brigade personnel fired into the air over a crowd of peaceful demonstrators on December 1. The reports also claimed that police severely beat several of the demonstrators before arresting them. Mission law enforcement contacts told us that police did peacefully disperse a

demonstration in Polimak because the organizers had failed to obtain a permit. The police detained fifteen people in connection with the incident but released all but one on December 2. (The individual still in custody is wanted on other charges.) The police did not/not fire any weapons during the incident. While the Mobile Brigade maintained an outer perimeter around the demonstration, Mobile Brigade personnel did not come into direct contact with the crowd. Fr. Rudolf Kambayong, Director of the Jayapura Catholic Diocese Peace and Justice Secretariat--one of Papua's most credible human rights organizations--corroborated the police account.

SOME PAPUANS TOOK THE DEMOCRATIC PATH

15. (C) While some Papuans took to the streets to air their grievances, others took to the halls of government. The leaders of FOKER, an umbrella group of Papuan NGOs, traveled to Jakarta on December 1 to air their concerns about the Special Autonomy Law, human rights and economic development. FOKER's Chairman (and IVLP alumnus) Septer Manufandu told poloff that his group would urge the GOI to fully implement the Special Autonomy Law and deliver on promises to accelerate the region's economic development. They planned to meet with officials in several central government ministries and with members of the Indonesian legislature. The latter represented a particular challenge, according to Manufandu, because many newly elected members were unfamiliar with Papuan issues.

HUME